

CONSTITUTIONS

OF A

SOCIETY,

TO SUPPORT AUTHORS IN DISTRESS;

AND

TO AFFORD TEMPORARY RELIEF TO THE
WIDOWS AND CHILDREN OF THOSE WHO
HAVE ANY CLAIM ON PUBLIC GRATITUDE
OR HUMANITY, FROM LITERARY MERIT
OR INDUSTRY.



THE peculiar reasons of this institution are so obvious as hardly to require enumeration.

All the boasted distinctions of England have great obligations to the Press. Princes are influenced, ministers propose measures, and magistrates are instructed, by the industry of literature; while the authors of hints, suggestions, and disquisitions, may be languishing in obscurity, or dying in distress.

This injustice, operating on irritable minds, generates that particular species of rancour incident to genius
in

2 CONSTITUTIONS OF A SOCIETY,

in free states ; producing personal satire on those of elevated condition ; the malignant jealousy of literary emulation ; and an indiscriminate, general calumny, as injurious to public interests, as it is dishonourable to human talents.

It is thought these evils may be meliorated or removed, by an institution to obtain justice or compassion for talents injured and depressed, to withdraw the dreadful apprehensions and prospects which warp integrity and pervert genius, and to produce candor and harmony in the provinces of literature.

Every description of genius and merit has some mode of compensation, except that devoted to general science, political disquisition, and the Belles Lettres. The learned professions, and all the provinces of arts merely imitative, have probabilities of remuneration or refuge :—Literature alone is neglected, when become a distinct pursuit, and absorbing the faculties of the mind.

It is the purpose of this institution to establish a fund ; on which Authors, properly recommended, may rely for assistance ; in proportion to the produce of that fund.

The annual subscription to be not less than a Guinea ; as much more as the abilities and inclination of the subscriber may admit.

Donations of ten Guineas, and upwards, to constitute
a Sub-

TO SUPPORT AUTHORS IN DISTRESS. 3

a Subscriber for life; and legacies in trust will be gratefully received.

As the Theatres are supported by literary talents; it is not doubted the managers will countenance such dramatic benefits as may be proposed by the Committee for the advantage of the fund.

Every other mode of increasing the revenues of the institution will be adopted; whether suggested by public or private information.

All business to be transacted by a Register, Treasurer, a Committee of fifteen, and a Council of fifty.

Every Subscriber to be a Constituent: and at noon, on the first Friday in May, to meet the other Subscribers, annually, to chuse Registers, Treasurers, a Committee of fifteen, and a Council of fifty, if the number of Subscribers exceed a hundred; if not, the Subscribers to discharge the offices of Council.

At the meeting of the Subscribers, Councils, or Committees, the President or Chairman is to be appointed only for a year; the decisions to be by a majority; and the President to give only a casting vote on an equal division. The Quorum of the Subscribers, or Society, in respect to the Council, to be one hundred and one; that of the Council twelve; and that of the Committee five.

4 CONSTITUTIONS OF A SOCIETY,

The pecuniary appointments, if any, for the Registers, Collectors, Messengers, &c. must be assigned and approved at their election. These officers may be suspended by the Council, on a complaint well supported by a member of the Committee, or of the Council; but they must not be discharged without a vote of the Subscribers. Security may be taken, by the Committee, for the execution of their trusts.

All applications for relief are to be made to a Register; who, if the cases be urgent, may immediately summon a Committee; if not, he is to submit them at the first meeting: and the Committee is to meet at a convenient and appointed hour, on the first Friday of every month, at a fixed and known place, where it may execute its offices; and where messages, letters, and applications, may be received.

If the Subscribers should be too numerous for the room or rooms appropriated to the Committee and Council, their yearly assembly must be held in some large and public building, at a small price of admission: but all unnecessary occasions of expending the revenues of the institution should be avoided.

The assistance afforded to Authors in distress, or to their widows and children, shall be at the discretion of the Committee; and be transmitted by a Treasurer according to its order.

All the stock, property, and revenues of the Society shall be in the public funds, in public and competent
secu-

TO SUPPORT AUTHORS IN DISTRESS. 5

securities, and at a banker's. No money shall be drawn for, but on an order of the Committee; no securities shall be changed; nor shall any part of a capital, whether in estates or funds, be disposed of, but by the consent of a general meeting of the Subscribers.

Books of Accounts by a Treasurer, and books of transactions and occurrences, by a Register, shall be always liable to inspection by the Committee and Council, or by any of their members. They shall be open four days in every year to any Subscriber: *i. e.* On Christmas, Lady, Midsummer, and Michaelmas days.

The monthly meetings of the Committee shall be open to any member or members of the Council, or of the Society if there be no Council; who may attend to the occurrences of the institution, but not immediately interfere or vote. If any irregularities or abuses be supposed to arise, four members of the Council, or of the Society if there be no Council, by directions to a Register, or by letters from themselves, may assemble the whole, to consider the measures in question, to obviate or approve their effects, and to suspend the operations of the Committee, of the Register or other Officers, until the general sense of the Subscribers be taken.

Temporary vacancies in the Committee, or in the offices, are to be filled up at the discretion of the Council.

Sub-

6 CONSTITUTIONS OF A SOCIETY, &c.

Subscriptions are received by the following Bankers :

HAMMERSLEY and Co. Pall-Mall.

COUTTS, Strand.

DIMSDALE and Co. Cornhill.

By the TREASURERS, { THOMAS MORRIS, Esq. No.
24, Baker-street, Portman-
square.
E. BROOKE, Bookseller, Bell-
yard, Temple Bar.

THOMAS DALE, M. D. Union Court,
Old Broad-street,
Mr. Deputy NICHOLS, Red-Lion-Pas- } REGISTERS.
sage, Fleet-street.

